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the day of Christ the King, there is always a procession in town which starts from the mother church and goes to a small altar set up in front of the County Hall, then to the fishermen's chapel, to a cross which stands in one of the squares, and back to the convent and church. A few people set their small household oratories in the street in front of their houses to be blessed by the priest as he passes. This procession is accompanied mostly by women of all classes, although the canopy over the Host is carried by men from Class B. Christmas is observed quietly except for the exchange of gifts.

[778] [788] *[565] [184] [431]

Prayers

794 782 *[565] [184]

Prayers are very popular throughout the year among the women of classes C and D. For a variety of reasons a group of women will get together in the house of one of them and pray aloud, standing before the little decorated niche which contains a picture or figure of the household saint. The one who knows the prayer best leads the others. A group may pray on the evening before the day of the patron saint of one of them, especially if they have been unable to have a Mass said because of the lack of money or a previous commitment of the priest. At times they pray because someone has promised his patron saint that he would do so if he were cured of an illness.

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Strangely, perhaps, the fishermen never seem to feel a need for supernatural help to overcome bad weather or lack of fish. A few of them, however, give a present to the Mother of the Waters in thanks for an exceptionally fine catch. At other times, people simply pray to their patron saints if they cannot have a party in their honor. Personal patron saints, however, do not play a very important part in the lives of the people of Vila Recôncavo, although nearly everyone has one and has at least a picture of the saint on the wall. It is common to find women who belong to an African cult group praying at these nightly gatherings in honor of the various saints who may or may not be represented in their cult houses.

[776] [794]

• 755 782 [754]

Exceptional fatigue, light illness, and pains may all be caused by the evil eye, and are removed by having a woman pray over the victim. There are several women in town who can make such prayers particularly well; however, they do not pray as a group. A woman goes to the house of the victim and, with a piece of thread in her hand which she passes over the body of the victim, says the Lord's Prayer and the

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Hail Mary. Some women say this process must be repeated three times in a row, others that it must be done each Friday for three weeks. This is a protective prayer "to take away the evil eye" (para tirar mau olhado). The thread which is used is taken away and carefully disposed of, by the person who prayed.

Conflict and Differential Participation

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The attitude of the priests toward conditions in their parishes is one of resignation. They realize that it is physically impossible for them to take religion to all the people or even to the majority of them. Also, they are disheartened by the poor intellectual basis the people have for understanding the doctrine of the church. They do not discourage the group prayers, nor do they encourage them; they simply let them exist. But they vigorously combat African cultism. For several years the fishermen's chapel was closed because of the cult activities of so many of the women who attended the chapel. Recently, however, the Franciscan superior reopened the chapel, feeling that it was better not to exclude the entire fisherman population from the church because a few of them also participated in African cults. For it had turned out that when the chapel was closed all the people in the lower part of town refused to go up the hill to the convent and therefore passed several years without attending Mass, confessing, or taking Communion. In sermons given during Mass an opportunity to condemn cultism is never lost, even though it may have little effect. The local church policy toward cultism depends upon the feelings of each new superior and whether he will tolerate it. The priest who reopened the chapel became a much-loved person in the town, at least by the lower classes, for he realized how few people in the total population indulge in cult activities compared to the many who go to watch. The caretaker of one of the rural chapels is also a cult leader on his plantation, but relations between him and the priests are cordial. Although most of the female devotees attend the Masses for their particular saints, the priestess of the cult house never goes to church and avoids meeting the priests if possible.

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Religion is more a part of the women's lives than of the men's, and there are more women than men at every Mass. There are a few strongly religious women (beatas) in the town

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the lower classes fail to have at least some knowledge of the ceremonial. In a region where there is little entertainment, such as in the town of Vila Recôncavo and especially in the rural area, the cults provide a major spectator activity, and those who have been exposed to it through their lives appreciate it as such. The number of active participants, however, is small. The house which is functioning in the town has about two dozen initiates, while the rural house is somewhat larger, having about forty-five devotees, only seven of whom are drawn from the plantation on which the house is situated. The rural house is more active for several reasons, according to local informants: the costumes are prettier, and therefore people prefer to dance there; the cult leader is a stronger personality and a better healer than the leader of the town house. The rural house is also more conveniently located for people from the surrounding plantations. Nevertheless, the small number of participants is indicative of the weakness of the institution in this area as a whole.

Healing, however, does play an important part in the cult activities, for the zelador who has "made his saint" has usually learned a large number of ritual and herbal cures. In fact, it is the healing aspect which brings most people to the cult activities. Sick persons, however, generally prefer to entrust themselves first to the ministrations of the plantation owner, plantation nurse, or town doctor. But if they feel they are not being helped, they turn to the cult house. If the sickness is diagnosed by the cult leader as a clear sign that the person is in contact with a spirit, the patient must enter the rites as an initiate or suffer the consequences. But for the ordinary run of headaches, stomach troubles, and skin eruptions, the cult leader draws upon his knowledge of herbal remedies. This knowledge is supposed to come from his deity, who often is St. Roch in this area, and who knows the cure. In fact, the leader of the rural house once compared his establishment with a pharmacy. He is paid for these medical services. Often one hears a person wishing that he could "have" such-and-such a saint so he would know how to cure and be able to make money, as do the cult leaders.

It is a general opinion that cult leaders are financially well off, although they themselves staunchly declare that they are not and that they must live from alms. As a rule all the participants in a house are obliged to contribute to the ceremonial honoring the leader's deity, which is usually the most extravagant ceremonial of the house.

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er of the Waters. Naturally, in such a small group, the secret is not very well kept and it is soon known who has sent a present, why, and when. Many people in this group, and some in Class A, entertain the fear that they may become themselves possessed by a deity, especially if they expose themselves to cult activities during a ceremony, and for this reason they do not attend the rituals. To a certain extent this fear is the basis for the protest many of them make against night-long drumming, although the common complaint is that they cannot sleep because of the noise. The sound of the drums at night is very impressive, and no one is unaware that nearby the supernatural is being called. It is very disturbing to those who do not understand the mechanics of the ceremonies and the meaning of the drumming and sacrifices.

Spiritualism

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Spiritualism, which does not use drums, is as disturbing as cultism to people of all classes, although because of its quieter character it is not always known when a session is taking place. Spiritualism seems to be gaining popularity in the area, although it is greatly feared by many people. It is slowly gaining adherents, however, because of the healing powers exhibited by the mediums. In most cases people are drawn to it, both in the town and in the rural area, through illness and the promise of a cure. Because of lack of aid from the doctor, or because of the expense of medical treatment, or perhaps because of the failure of the African cult to cure him, a patient may try spiritualism as a last resort. For those who are helped by it, it becomes a constant companion, and although they may have entered with fear, they soon lose it. They become staunch defenders and try to draw in their friends. The greatest successes in curing seem to follow the herbal treatments of the African cultists, but spiritualism requires no further obligations, as do the cults. It is common to hear someone say that attendance at a spiritualist seance cured him of some minor ailment and left him free of obligations, and that he did not even have to pay the medium. Spiritualism is also used to discover and counteract the evil eye and evil machinations of any enemy. In spiritualism one finds the same Indian spirits which are found in the local African cults, although no dancing is involved. There is now definite competition between the mediums and the cult leaders for adherents.

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755 There is one outstanding case of a Class A family which has
787 been "helped" by spiritualism. This family had not been too
*565 well liked in the town and felt that evil was being worked against
it. It was claimed that a local medium prevented harm to the
father of this family through the medium's spirit. The father be-
came convinced of the value of spiritualism and converted his
wife to it. They now make no move without first consulting the
spirits, and they frequently call the medium to their house in
Salvador for aid. The urban upper class is no stranger to spir-
itualism, and even those who make no use of mediums and
spiritualistic sessions seem to consider themselves possible
victims of spiritualism. A decade or so ago, experiments with
spiritualism, such as the moving glass, were popular. These
experiments gained many adherents and left many others in a
state between belief and disbelief in the possibilities of spir-
itualism.

Protestantism

795 Protestantism has made no entry in Vila Recôncavo. This
797 is a minor point of pride among the residents, who have heard
177 of Protestantism but know nothing about it. In other areas of
the Recôncavo there have been converts, but as yet there are
no Protestant churches, chapels, or house groups in Vila Re-
côncavo. In other communities, traveling ministers hold serv-
ices in small private houses of the adherents. Just as with the
African cults, there always are many onlookers standing out-
side who discuss the merits of the sermon and of the Bible
readings and hymn singing. Those who are sufficiently im-
pressed sometimes join, but as yet there is considerable re-
sistance to another organized religion.

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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The mau olhado, or "evil eye," a magical power presumed in many parts of the world, including Europe, to be possessed, often unwittingly, by certain individuals, is thought at Bahia to bring death to plants, birds, and even small children whom the person has coveted or, perhaps, merely admired. More natural forces are the *ar do vento*, or "air of the wind," a cold draught said to result in indigestion, deformity, insanity, or death; the *espinhela caida*, or "fallen breastbone," which presumably brings on an emaciated condition of the body; and *sangue nova*, or "new blood," thought to be responsible for the breaking-out of a rash. Dew must not be allowed to fall on the head. Certain diseases, like syphilis and leprosy, are considered defects common to all men.[16] However, the persistent efforts of agencies like the Rockefeller Foundation have widely disseminated the idea that malaria results from the bite of a mosquito.

The treatment or prevention of disease is the logical counterpart of a magical theory of causation. Thus, members of this section of the Bahian population attempt to control personal destiny through the use of charms or other magical means or through the direct intervention of a deity, whose favor is sought by the offering of gifts or the performance of prescribed rituals. Thus, to counteract the influence of the "evil eye," charms are worn, or pieces of the *Guiné*, *Arruda*, or *Vassourinha Doce* plants are passed, to the accompaniment of magical words, over and about the affected person's head.

goat may be killed, or a doll made and its neck pierced by a bit of wood. Either object is then placed in the doorway of the individual to be harmed or in any other place where he is likely to pass, the one depositing the *feitiço* calling out, as he drops it, the name of the person for whom harm is intended.

[16] "Syphilis," a black explained, "began with the world. Everyone has it, even horses, although it may never show up."

4; Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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789 head. The wearing of *patuás*, or written prayers, is presumed to "close the body" (*fechar o corpo*) against disease or accident. The nut known as *chapeu de Napoleão* ("Napoleon's hat"), if worn on a string about the neck, similarly is reputed to possess magical power.[17] A cord of deerskin passed over the affected area is presumed to cure erysipelas; a string of white beads worn about the neck of a mother is thought to increase the flow of her milk; a cord tied tightly about the waist of a pregnant woman will, it is believed, "keep the baby from going to the head"; and a stone in the hair is thought to retard delivery. Considered particularly efficacious in all cases of illness is the "*itá* of Xangô."[18]

782 "Prayers," or the use of magical words or phrases over an
• 755 affected part of the body, are also extensively employed. A common belief is that the *pae de santo* can in this way cure snakebite.

782 The direct intervention of a deity may be invoked as
[776] when presents are made to the *mães d'agua* (female deities who are presumed to inhabit bodies of water) to remove illness or misfortune or to assure future success. Thus, fisher-

[17] At the children's clinic a black mother brought in a child very ill. About his neck was a cord suspending a *chapeu de Napoleão*. To the physician's query, the mother replied, "They said it would make him well. Everyone told me to use it, and I didn't know."

755 [18] *Itás* (Tupi equivalent of "rocks" or "stones") of Xangô, or, as they are
778 also called, *pedras* of Santa Barbara, are thought to have fallen from heaven during thunderstorms. They are said to have penetrated into the earth seven *braças* (13.2 meters) and to have returned to the surface after seven
[554] years. The person so fortunate as to find one of these stones is considered a highly privileged individual. The *itá* is used by the *pae de santo* to crush the leaves of certain medicinal plants which are then put, together with the yolk of an egg, into a vessel and mixed, while an invocation in Nagô, known as *atutu*, is intoned. The stone is then covered with the crushed leaves and egg yolk and allowed to stand for a period of time. The liquid prepared in this way is considered to possess miraculous healing power.

4; Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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but also against all skin ailments, including leprosy. Particularly approachable is the deity to whom a person is dedicated. "This bad cut on my foot," remarked a *mãe de santo* dedicated to Xangô, "would not heal. So I talked it over with Xangô. He agreed to heal it, and told me what to use. It's now getting well; it's much better already."

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An individual troubled by continued ill-health, business difficulties, or even bad dreams may request of the fetish-cult priest the ritual of *lavagem das contas*, or "washing the beads." Divination is first resorted to in order to identify the *orixá* "responsible" for the difficulty. Then the beads sacred to this deity are immersed in water, a newly purchased basin being used for the purpose, and a handful of leaves also sacred to him are crushed and added. After a time, the beads are removed and washed with *sabão da costa* ("soap from the Coast"). Thus purified, they are given to the person suffering the ill fortune, who must subsequently keep them in a clay vessel and from time to time wear them about his neck.

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Considered one of the most effective methods of "removing" a disease or misfortune is the *troca da cabeça*, or "changing of heads," whose purpose is to transfer the disturbing influence from the afflicted person to another individual. The ritual varies. The afflicted one may have his head rubbed with a chicken or a pigeon, which, having thus acquired the evil influence, is then killed. Or an *ebó*, or *bozó*, as it is more commonly called, may be prepared,[11] and the affliction purposely transferred to another individual by leav-

[11] The *bozó* almost always includes a dead hen, popcorn, manioc meal with *azeite de dendê*, pieces of clothing from the one to be benefited, nickel or copper coins, certain African foods like *acassá*, *abertém*, and *acarajé*, and, if available, the African fruits, the *obí* and the *orobó*, of ritualistic significance.

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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ing the *bozó* in a place where the intended victim is likely to step on it or otherwise touch it.[23] An animal may be "prepared with the *ebó*" so that whoever subsequently touches the animal will catch the illness or inherit the misfortune. If, however, one wishes to avoid transferring the evil to another person, he may do so and still rid himself of his affliction by leaving the *ebó* in a cemetery.

If a *filha de santo* (ceremonial dancer of the fetish cult) would avoid illness or other misfortune, it is considered highly important that she observe all the taboos, especially those attaching to food and drink. A pregnant woman must avoid vegetables and all meats other than chicken; she must not join a funeral procession, since the spirit of the deceased might enter her child; and she must avoid a rose touching her bare breast, for otherwise the child, it is believed, will be born with a birthmark.[23]

Charms may be of a specific nature like the *figa*[24] or the

[23] The affliction may, however, be transferred to someone toward whom no harm was originally intended if the individual placing the *ebó*, either ignorantly or with intention, fails to leave it in the designated place. The first person coming in physical contact with it will be affected. So widespread is this fear of the *ebó* that chauffeurs, even at the risk of an accident, will not run a wheel over one.

[23] Current folk medicines include: for syphilis, whale oil; for a toothache, pig or burro dung smoked in a clay pipe; for a cough, sweetened tea prepared by boiling a termite nest; for sore throat, tea made by boiling a live lizard whose body is then removed from the vessel and buried with its head toward the new moon. Native herbs are extensively employed, particularly by *curandeiros*, or they may be administered at the hands of anyone "instructed" by a "manifesting" deity, a common occurrence in those *candomblés* known as *de caboclo* (a portion of whose ritual is probably of native Indian origin) and in spiritualist centers like that in Alto do Bom Gosto, in Calcada, one of whose directors remarked, "So many *caboclos* 'manifest themselves' because they know so well how to heal with herbs."

[24] The *figa* is an image, usually made from wood, of a closed fist with the thumb inserted between the index and middle fingers.

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jacús, found one, and shot at it. The *jacú* flew at him with its claws extended and severely scratched him. He shot at it again. It flew back and clawed at his eyes. Then he heard a voice, saying "You know you must not hunt on Fridays." It was the *caipora*. The man staggered home, and fell senseless in the door of his house. I knew this man well.

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The *biatátá* is said to be a woman who inhabits the sea, appearing above water only at night, gradually increasing in size until she assumes an enormous shape, and "casting a huge and frightening shadow."

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Fear of the toad, probably also a survival of Indian belief, is common.[39] If a toad happens to hop into the door of a house, the occupant will immediately grab a broom and sweep it out, repeating over and over, "Creio em Deus Padre."[40] If a malicious person paints a toad on the wall of a dwelling, its occupants will at once desert the place.

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The following account reveals in an intimate way the mental world of a considerable portion of the Bahian lower class. It was related by a young Negro woman in the form of a series of personal experiences and is presented here in as nearly as possible the exact phrasing in which it was originally given.

I was three years old. I was sitting with my mother when something hit me, and I fell over unconscious. She picked me up and took me to a doctor. He gave me medicine and said that it was congestion. Some thought it was the *ar do vento*.

I knew nothing of what was going on; it was as if I were dead. To

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[39] "Montoya says ('Manuscripto guarani da Bibliotheca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro sobre a primitiva catechese dos Indios das Missões,' *Annaes da Bibliotheca Nacional*, Vol. VI) that among Indians observed by him, the entrance of a toad into a gathering of people was a sign of the approaching death of one of those present" (Gilberto Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala* [2d ed.; Rio, 1936], p. 99).

[40] "I believe in God, the Father."

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help me get better, they took me up off the ground.[40] Then my mother called in Mamédê [the local *pae de santo*], to see what was the matter with me. He came, *abriu a mesa*[41] and said that this had been with me from my birth. My mother then asked him if he could cure it. He said he could. He made her buy plates, *moringues*,[42] beads, cups, coconuts, etc. Then he prepared all that.[43] They washed my head with water from the sacred leaves. My mother asked if he could take that thing away so that it would not come back again. He said he would not dare to do that, or I would die. He said it always came back.

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When it returned, they washed my head again. I did not know what was going on. It was as if I had slept. When I awakened, I was all "prepared": dressed *de creola* with a *saia grande* and a *torso* on my head. Everything red. *Sandalias* too. Everything the same color.

When this happened I was still small. The *pae de santo* said that I was under a spell [*era encanto*]. He "did the work" once more, and I was all right again. But when I was seven years old, it took hold of me once more. My mother was afraid and begged the *pae de santo* to do something about it. She pleaded so earnestly that finally he said he would speak with the enchantment [*encanto*] so that it would not come down any more.

It didn't come back until I was fifteen years old. Then they arranged another dress *de creola*, and also handkerchiefs, strings of beads, bracelets, and *sandalias*. They ordered plates, small glasses, and *quartinhas* bought. When all this was ready, the *pae de santo* washed my head in sacred water. He said it was the "owner of my head" [*dono da minha cabeça*] who had done that to me. There in Cachoeira, across the river from São Felix,[44] is the *casa de Gêge*.[45] The *pae de santo* is the grandson of an African.

[513] [40] That is, she was removed from the reed mat which, placed directly upon the floor of a hut, is extensively used among the poorer families for sleeping purposes.

[285] [41] That is, he set up certain means of divination.

[415] [42] Water pots made of red clay.

[43] That is, he submitted it to the proper ritual.

[361] [44] Cachoeira and São Felix are twin cities, separated by the Paraguassú River, located across the Bay to the north of the city of Bahia.

[794] [45] The *candomblé* of the Gêge cult in which she had now been inducted.

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When I was sixteen years old I went across the river to live in São Felix. There was a man there who was crazy. We asked what was the matter with him, and they said that he had seven Exú's[47] in his body. They had given him a cigar and when he began to smoke, he became wild. He was nearly insane. He did not want to hear the word of God. When they talked of going to Mass, he wanted to run away. They took him and tied him up. He stayed this way two whole weeks. Once in a while his relatives came to see him. Finally, they decided to take him to a *candomblé*. They untied him and he went. For a long time he remained there and kept on acting the same way. Then the head of the *candomblé* took a hand in the matter. He ordered them to get black cloth, candles, *azeite de dendê*, incense, and several other things which he needed. After he had finished, he gave the man a bath to clean him up. When twelve o'clock came, he stretched him out in the middle of the floor. And there he lay all sprawled out. We saw a black Negro with red lips sitting on his knee. He was about this high [indicating approximately two and one-half feet], and as black as coal. His lips were as red as the lid of that can [indicating a *malte* container with bright red cover]. He had large ears that stuck out like this [indicating about a twelve-inch spread]. He was horrible. His horns were this long [indicating about six inches]. And his tail, about a meter. His eyes were big, like this [indicating an oval three inches in diameter]. They were the size of "three children."[48] His tongue looked like a snake's; it was really four separate tongues. And he was sitting there on the man's knee. We were all afraid. We wanted to run; but we dared not. He didn't stay long. Only about ten minutes. He left the man's knee and disappeared into the body of the man who had bought and brought the "things." The *pae de santo* filled up a basin, and Exú took himself away. We did not see him disappear. Ten minutes later the man got up, feeling better. He had been sitting there crying hard. They shaved off his hair, washed his head and painted it with a pencil, white, blue, pink, and lavender. Then they

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[47] Exú (pronounced "Ä-shu") is an African deity who is often, although not always, thought of as possessing an evil nature. See chap. x.

[48] This expression was explained in the following manner: "A person looking into an ordinary eye sees the image of one child; in Exú's eyes the image was three times as big."

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put many beads of O Senhor do Bomfim on him, and a *figa;* they covered him with ornaments.

[789] The *figa* is to free one from the evil eye. For example: I have a
[754] dress. You think it is pretty, and you want it very much; something then happens to it. Or a *sabiá*[10] sings beautifully. You are visiting its owner; you want it, you want it very badly. You leave, and it dies or something else happens to it because you cannot have it. This is the evil eye. One needs to "pray it away" with *Guiné*, *Arruda*, or *Vassourinha Doce*. An oxhorn in the garden will keep it away from plants.

[794] Then the man went around with hands folded, "taking the bless-
[776] ing" from everyone there. Seven children went out with lighted can-
[793] dles. Then he got up entirely well. Today he has a *casa de candomblé*. He is now very old. His *orixá* is Ogum de Gêge. The *pae de santo* who treated him is of Ogum de Mina.

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776 My guardian angel [*anjo de guarda*] is Xangô. Ogum is a soldier, Xangô is of the thunder and also of the lightning. He is Santa Barbara of the Irmandade. All the *orixás* are equal. But Oxalá directs everything. Nanan is his wife. In the Gêge language she is called Odé.

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784 My sister, she died, burned up. She caught all on fire. He who killed her is Oxóssi; it was he who killed her. My sister is buried in the Quinta dos Lazaros.[10] She burned to death because she disobeyed him. He sent a message and she paid no attention to it. Her husband had a *saveiro*.[11] Every trip which he made she went along in the boat. She had no children. Everywhere he went, she went too. When, one time, the *orixá* "arrived" and told her that she should not travel on the water, she didn't take his words very seriously; she laughed the matter off, "gave it a *muxóxó*." But about a week afterward, she went with her husband in a *saveiro* across the Bay to Bahia. Between Itaparica and Salinas the *saveiro* caught afire. It had powder on it and the powder exploded. Parts of the *saveiro* were ripped off and hurled into the water. She was surrounded by fire. When they finally reached her, she was badly burned. They brought her to the Santa Isabel Hospital,

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[10] A Brazilian bird which can be trained to sing tunes.

[10] A Bahian cemetery.

[501] [11] A sturdy sailboat used on Todos os Santos Bay and its contributory rivers to transport light articles of commerce.